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EXAMINER
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ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
3623	

DATE MAILED: 12/06/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

	Application No.	Applicant(s)
Office Action Summary	09/705,486	GENDLER, JOSEPH
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Scott L. Jarrett	3623	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE <u>3</u> MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on *16 November 2005*.

2a)☐ This action is **FINAL**.   2b)☒ This action is non-final.

3)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4)☒ Claim(s) *68-104* is/are pending in the application.

    4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6)☒ Claim(s) *68-104* is/are rejected.

7)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9)☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10)☒ The drawing(s) filed on *03 November 0200* is/are: a)☐ accepted or b)☒ objected to by the Examiner.

    Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

    Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11)☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

    a)☐ All   b)☐ Some * c)☐ None of:

      1.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

      2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

      3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

    * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1)☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

2)☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)

3)☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date *11/16/2005*.

4)☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ .

5)☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)

6)☐ Other: _____ .

DETAILED ACTION

1.   This non-final Office Action is responsive to Applicant's Request for Continued
Examination filed October 5, 2005 that amended claims 83 and 92, and added new
claim 104.   Currently claims 68-104 are pending.

Response to Arguments

2.   Applicant's arguments filed October 5, 2005 with respect to pending claims 68-
104 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

It is noted that the applicant did not challenge the Official Notice(s) cited in the
previous Office Action therefore those statements as presented are herein after prior
art.   Specifically it has been established that it was old and well known in the art at the
time of the invention:

- to review/confirm electronic funds transfers wherein the confirmation of
payment (disbursement, transfer) is an essential component of electronic funds
transfers for without such confirmations the paid party would not be able to confirm
receipt of the payment prior to resuming work, providing a product/service or the like;

- to assign project numbers to projects for the purpose of uniquely identifying a
project and its related information/documents thereby providing the ability for individuals
and systems to differentiate/uniquely identify individual projects for the purposes of
reporting, accounting, project management or the like;

- to evaluate bids/extended offers by a vendor (contractor, supplier, etc.) as one step in the bidding process that ultimately leads to the selection/approval/acceptance of a bid/vendor; and

- to enable users to access all project information/documents related to the projects they are assigned to/working on as well as to list projects (deliverables, tasks, etc.) associated with a particular user thereby providing users with a list of projects (activities, processes, etc.) they are associated with and/or responsible for as part of a workflow system/method.

Drawings

3.   New corrected drawings in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in this application because Figures 1-16 are illegible and/or informal. Applicant is advised to employ the services of a competent patent draftsperson outside the Office, as the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office no longer prepares new drawings. The corrected drawings are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. The requirement for corrected drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Title

4.   The title of the invention is not descriptive. A new title is required that is clearly indicative of the invention to which the claims are directed.

The following title is suggested: System and method for Providing Funding Approval associated with a Project based on a Document Collection.

Information Disclosure Statement

5.   The information disclosure statement filed on November 16, 2005 has been

made part of the record in the application, however the submitted IDS constitutes 28

Pages and contains 509 references wherein a vast majority of the references cited

appear not to be relevant to the claimed invention. The applicant is invited to specifically

point out those references that maybe pertinent to the claimed invention. The IDS has

been placed in the application file, but the information referred to therein has not been

considered.

The information disclosure statement filed November 16, 2005 fails to comply

with 37 CFR 1.98(a)(2), which requires a legible copy of each U.S. and foreign patent',

each publication or that portion which caused it to be listed, and all other information or

that portion which caused it to be listed. It has been placed in the application file, but the

information referred to therein has not been considered.

. *Claim Objections*

6.   Claim 101 is objected to because of the following informalities: Claim 101

contains a grammatical error – missing "and" between the second to last and last

method steps. Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

7.   The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

> The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

8.   Claim 85 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Regarding Claim 85 the disclosure does not clearly define the phrase "request for assistance." The phrase "request for assistance" as claimed could include a plurality of requests including but not limited to loan/mortgage application, loan draw request, invoice, requisition, purchase order, requesting payment for services/goods rendered, contracts, submittals or a plurality of other "requests" thereby making the phrase "request for assistance" vague and indefinite.

Examiner interpreted the phrase "request for assistance" to mean any of the above-mentioned definitions for the purposes of examination.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

9.   The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that

form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(a) the invention was known or used by others in this country, or patented or described in a printed
publication in this or a foreign country, before the invention thereof by the applicant for a patent.

10.   Claims 68-87, 90-91, 93-95, 97-100 and 102 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(a)

as being anticipated by Primavera System, Inc.'s Primavera Expedition system/product

as disclosed in at least the following:

        I. Primavera Expedition Version 6.0 User's Guide (1998), herein after reference

A; and

        II. Primavera Web Pages (1999), herein after reference B.

        Regarding Claims 68, 86, 91, 99 and 102 Primavera Expedition teaches a

system and method for managing construction projects that provides detailed workflow

support for creating and managing projects and its associated project document

collections wherein the project documents include but are not limited to: contracts,

purchase orders, change orders, proposals, invoices, requisitions, submittals and the

like (reference A: Pages ix, 3, 6-8, 10-11, 16, 165, 177-179, 198, 229).

        More specifically Primavera Expedition teaches a system and method for

managing a project comprising:

- establishing a database maintained by a project management entity

(construction manager, general contract, owner, etc.; reference A: Pages 16-18; e.g.

Sybase; reference A: Bullet 10, Page 10; Pages 93-97);

- providing funding approval associated with the project, the funding approval

being associated effected in association with project documentation contained in the

database (e.g. approved revisions/change orders, initial/committed budget,

invoice/requisition approval, negotiated, etc.; reference A: Paragraph 3, Page 16; Bullet

6, Pages 168, 173, 198; Step 5, Page 199; Paragraph 2, Page 204; Pages 212-213);

- accessing the document collection by a vendor (supplier, contractor, partner,

general contractors, construction managers, etc.; reference A: Pages 16-18);

- vendor entering/submitting information related to the project electronically

(invoices, requisitions, purchase orders, change orders, submittals, etc.; reference A:

Pages 177-179, 198); and

- vendor determining that funding approval for the project has been secured

through access to the document collection (e.g. submit/track submittals, proceed orders,

committed, actuals, pending, changes, etc.; reference A: Page 6-8, 163-166, 181;

"Funding", Bullet 5, Page 165; "reviewing contract status", Page 188; reference B:

"Reviews and Approvals", Page 3).

Primavera Expedition further teaches that the project management system

comprises a client/server architecture (reference B: Page 2) as well as enables users to

access the system via the Internet (reference A: Page 417).

Regarding Claims 69-70 Primavera Expedition teaches a project management system and method further comprising transferring monetary funds (distributing funds, making payments, paying invoices/requisitions/purchase orders, etc.) to the vendor after a predetermined event has occurred such as the completion of a portion of a project ("schedule of values", unit prices, lump sum, periodic project payment, etc.; reference A: Pages 178-179, 181, 184-185, 198, 201).

Regarding Claims 71-72 and 83 Primavera Expedition teaches a project management system and method wherein the vendor submits, electronically, an invoice upon the completion of a portion of the project (reference A: Page 198; Step 5, Pages 199-201, 217, 219-221, 227) as well as obtaining an invoice from each vendor (submittals, requisitions, purchase orders, etc.; reference A: Pages 198, 219-225).

Regarding Claim 73 Primavera Expedition teaches a project management system and method wherein subsequent to the submission of the vendor invoice a payment goes through a validation ("certification", verification, etc.) process and is charged against portions of a project contract (e.g. cost distribution; reference A: Pages 37, 198-201, 204, 206, 212-213).

Regarding Claim 74 Primavera Expedition teaches a project management system and method further comprising securing the document collection via access

rights (user security, login/password, etc.; reference A: Page 4; Bullet 9, Page 10; Page 23).

Regarding Claim 75 Primavera Expedition teaches a project management system and method wherein the project is a construction project (reference A: construction manager, general contractor; Pages 16-18; reference B: Paragraph 1; Page 4).

It is noted that the type of project merely represents non-functional descriptive material and is not functionally involved in the steps recited nor does the type of project alter the recited structural elements. The recited method steps would be performed the same regardless of the type of project managed or the intended field of use for the method/system. Further, the structural elements remain the same regardless of the type of project or the intended field of use for the method/system. Thus, this descriptive material will not distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art in terms of patentability, *see In re Gulack, 703 F.2d 1381, 1385, 217 USPQ 401, 404 (Fed. Cir. 1983); In re Lowry, 32 F.3d 1579, 32 USPQ2d 1031 (Fed. Cir. 1994); MPEP 2106.*

Regarding Claim 80 Primavera Expedition teaches a project management system and method further comprising providing a contract to the vendor wherein the contract, as part of the project documentation, defines the tasks to be performed by the vendor (reference A: Pages 163, 177-178).

Regarding Claim 81 Primavera Expedition teaches a project management system and method wherein the contract provides for the issuance of change orders (reference A: Pages 227-243).

Regarding Claims 82 and 93 Primavera Expedition teaches a project management system and method further comprises providing a list of all projects associated with a particular user and providing access to project documentation for each project listed (e.g. selection tree, project files; reference A: Pages 12-13, 26).

Regarding Claim 84 Primavera Expedition teaches a project management system and method wherein the project is assigned a project number (project number, job number, etc.; reference A: "Items Overdue" table, Page 5; Project Information, Page 21).

Regarding Claims 76 and 78 Primavera Expedition teaches a project management system and method wherein the vendor's determination that approval for the project has been secured is effected by the vendor's review, electronically, of a purchase order (reference A: requisition/invoice/purchase order workflow/process, application and certification of payment, proceed orders; Pages 198-200, 212-213, 219-220).

Regarding Claim 77 Primavera Expedition teaches a project management system and method wherein the vendor (general contractor, construction manager, etc.) accesses payment confirmation via the system/method (reference A: closing out purchase order using invoices, invoice report, submittal report, contract status; Pages 198, 212-213, 219-220, 418).

Regarding Claim 79 Primavera Expedition teaches a project management system and method wherein the purchase order is electronically issued to the vendor and a notification is made to the project manager (e.g. email to owner/construction manager, distribution lists, document routing; reference A: Pages 111, 178-179 184-185, 198, 204, 217).

Regarding Claim 85 Primavera Expedition teaches a project management system and method wherein the funding approval is part of a client (owner) request (request for assistance, contract, requisition, submittal, etc.; reference A: Pages 37, 129, 163, 177, 311).

Regarding Claim 87 Primavera Expedition teaches a project management system and method wherein the approval process includes a series of approvers (reference A: Paragraph 2, Page 204; reference B: "Reviews and Approvals", Page 3).

Regarding Claim 90 Primavera Expedition teaches a project management system and method further comprises soliciting work from the vendor (transmittals, submittals, contracts, negotiate, etc.; reference A: Pages 39, 129, 292-298; 312-315).

Regarding Claim 94 Primavera Expedition teaches a project management system and method further comprises providing an evaluation of an offer extended by a vendor (submittals process, contract negotiation/changes; reference A: Pages 227-228; 292-298, 312-314, 324-325, 329).

Regarding Claim 95 Primavera Expedition teaches a project management system and method wherein the review entity is a project manager and the offer extended is a bid (reference A: Pages 227-228, 292-298, 312-314).

Regarding Claim 97 Primavera Expedition teaches a project management system and method wherein the vendor is a construction entity (reference A: Pages 16-18).

It is noted that the label applied to the vendor merely represents non-functional descriptive material and is not functionally involved in the steps recited nor does the type of project alter the recited structural elements. The recited method steps would be performed the same regardless of the label applied to the vendor or the intended field of use, as implied by the vendor's label, for the method/system. Further, the structural

elements remain the same regardless of the label applied to the vendor or the intended

field of use, as implied by the vendor's label, for the method/system. Thus, this

descriptive material will not distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art in terms

of patentability, see In re Gulack, 703 F.2d 1381, 1385, 217 USPQ 401, 404 (Fed. Cir.

1983); In re Lowry, 32 F.3d 1579, 32 USPQ2d 1031 (Fed. Cir. 1994); MPEP 2106.

Regarding Claim 98, Claim 98 recites similar limitations to Claims 68-70 and 75

and is therefore rejected using the same art and rationale as applied in the rejection of

Claims 68-70 and 75.

Regarding Claim 100, Claim 100 recites similar limitations to Claims 68-70 and is

therefore rejected using the same art and rationale as applied in the rejection of Claims

68-70.

11.   Claims 88-89, 96, 101 and 103-104 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being

unpatentable over Primavera System, Inc.'s Primavera Expedition as disclosed in at

least the following:

    I. Primavera Expedition Version 6.0 User's Guide (1998), herein after reference

A; and

    II. Primavera Web Pages (1999), herein after reference B

    as applied to claims 68-87, 90-91, 93-95, 97-100 and 102 above and further in

view of Schuyler et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,832,202.

    Regarding Claims 88-89 Primavera Expedition teaches a project management

system and method comprising a workflow subsystem/component for managing project

document collections (contracts, purchase orders, submittals, etc.) including managing

the submission, review and approval of those documents as well as changes to those

documents as part of a customized workflow/process (reference A: Pages 9, 227-228,

247-248, 269, 324).

    Primavera Expedition does not expressly teach that the approver returns the

approval to a previous approver who is not the requestor or the approver returns the

approval to a previous approver and the requestor as claimed.

    Schuyler et al. teach an approval method/system wherein funding

requests/approvals are processed via a request for authorization workflow in an

analogous art of project administration and management, the system/method

comprises:

     - a series (successive) of approvers (Column 1, Lines 55-68; Column 4, Lines

60-65);

     - returning funding approval to a previous approver who is not the requester

(Column 8, Lines 39-68; Figures 2A-2B); and

     - returning funding approvals to the requestor and previous approver (Column 8,

Lines 39-68);

for the purposes of improving the approval process (workflow) by automating manual

tasks (Column 1, Lines 40-45).

     More generally Schuyler et al. teach a system and method for routing requests

for authorizations (e.g. approval for funding, expenses, applications, work assignments,

etc.) wherein the approval process is defined as a workflow. Schuyler et al. teach

requests for approvals are routed based on an approval process/rules that include but is

not limited to a series of approvers, hierarchy of approvers (Column 1, Lines 28-32),

contract rules (Column 1, Lines 58-62) and the like (Abstract; Column 1, Lines 55-68;

Column 2, Lines 6-36; Column 3, Lines 59-68; Figures 2A-2B).

     Schuyler et al. teach that the system and method for managing requests for

approvals stores a plurality of documents associated with each request in a database

(Column 5, Lines 6-62; Figure 1), provides user notification of request status (rejection,

acceptance, etc.; Column 7, Lines 27-32; Column 8, Lines 42-49; Column 10, Lines 10-

12) and enables users to access approval information over a computer network
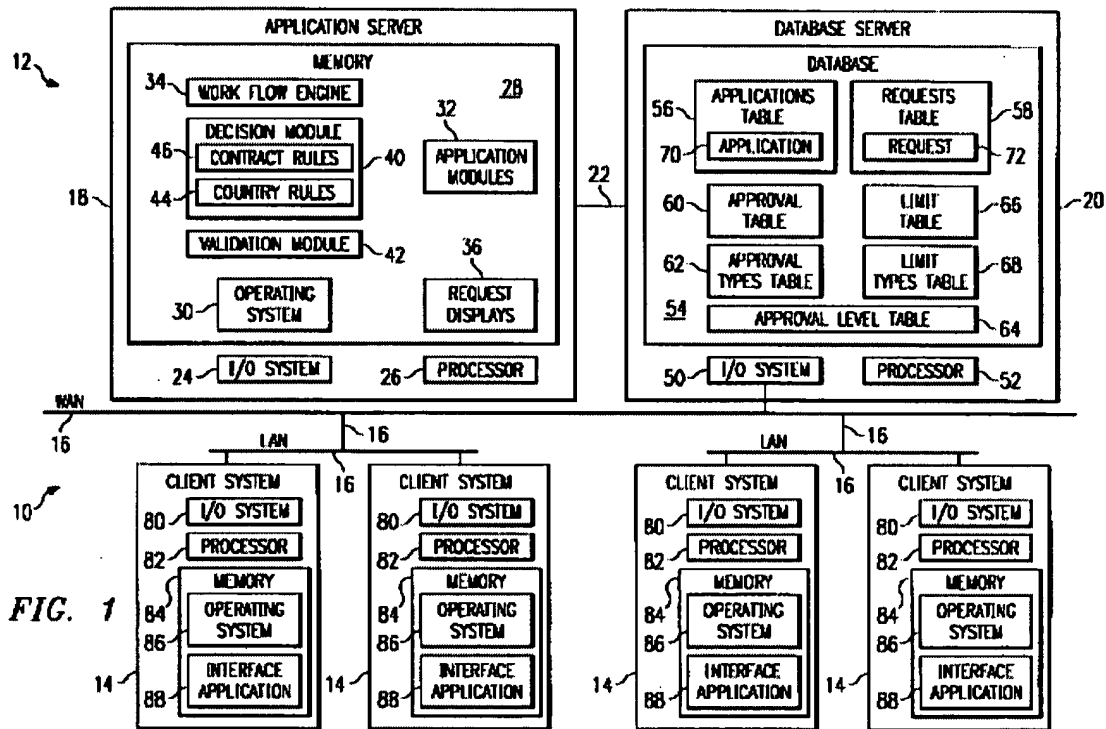
(Column 7, Lines 38-42).

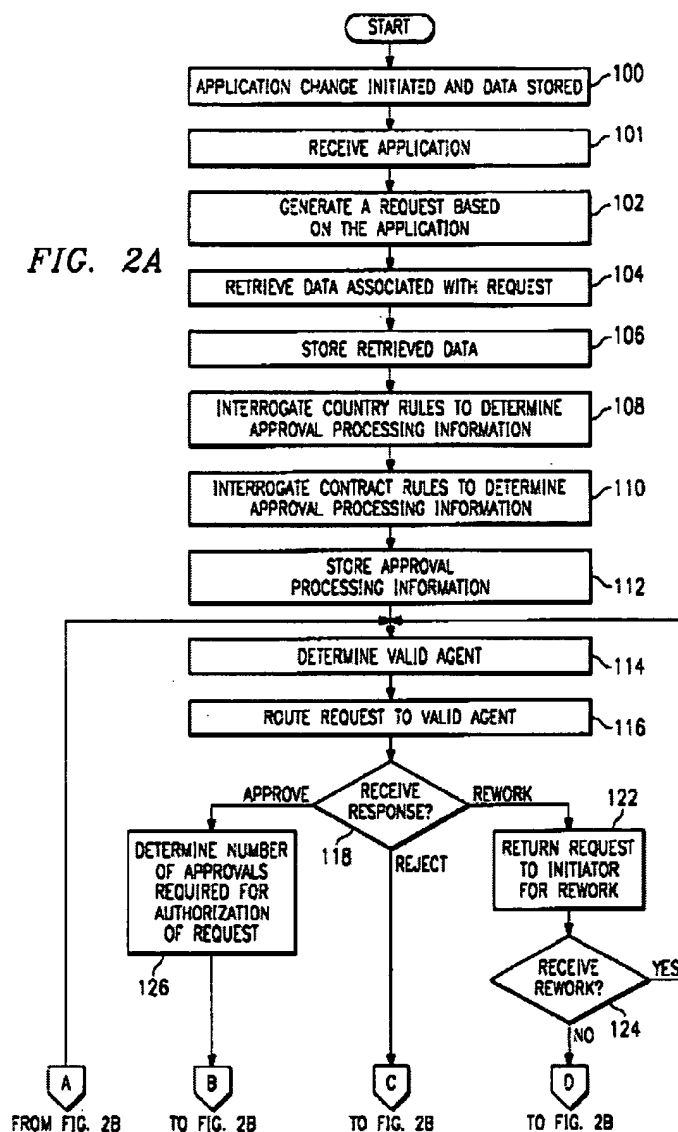

Figure 1: Schuyler et al., Figure 1

FIG. 2A

START

APPLICATION CHANGE INITIATED AND DATA STORED ~100

RECEIVE APPLICATION ~101

GENERATE A REQUEST BASED ON THE APPLICATION ~102

RETRIEVE DATA ASSOCIATED WITH REQUEST ~104

STORE RETRIEVED DATA ~106

INTERROGATE COUNTRY RULES TO DETERMINE APPROVAL PROCESSING INFORMATION ~108

INTERROGATE CONTRACT RULES TO DETERMINE APPROVAL PROCESSING INFORMATION ~110

STORE APPROVAL PROCESSING INFORMATION ~112

DETERMINE VALID AGENT ~114

ROUTE REQUEST TO VALID AGENT ~116

RECEIVE RESPONSE? 118

APPROVE — DETERMINE NUMBER OF APPROVALS REQUIRED FOR AUTHORIZATION OF REQUEST 126

REJECT

REWORK 122 — RETURN REQUEST TO INITIATOR FOR REWORK

RECEIVE REWORK? 124 — YES / NO

A — FROM FIG. 2B

B — TO FIG. 2B

C — TO FIG. 2B

D — TO FIG. 2B
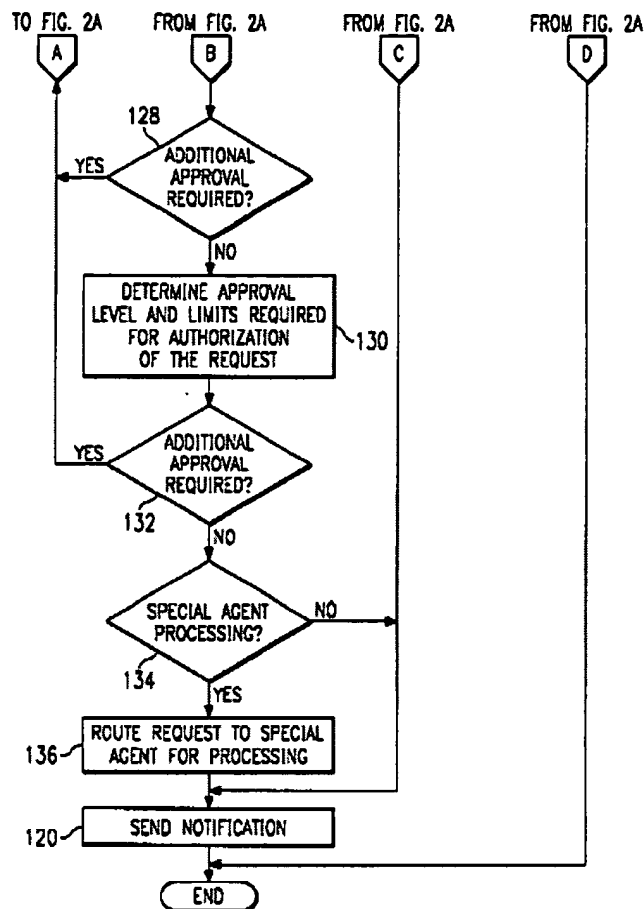
Figure 2: Schuyler et al., Figure 2A

FIG. 2B

Figure 3: Schuyler et al., Figure 2B

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention

that the construction project management system and method, with its utilization of a

customized workflow process for managing the receipt, review, approval and payment

related to a collection of project documents (submittals, invoices, contracts, requisition,

purchase orders, etc.) as taught by Primavera Expedition would have benefited from

routing/returning approvals/reviews to previous approvers and/or the requestor (a series

of approvers/reviewers) based on a plurality of rules (contract, monetary, hierarchy,

etc.) in view of the teachings of Schuyler et al.; the resultant system providing a

substantially automated and robust funding approval process (Schuyler et al.: Column

1, Lines 40-45).

Regarding Claim 96 Primavera Expedition teaches a customizable, multiple

reviewer, multi-stage workflow to manage the submission, receipt, review and approval

of a plurality of project documents, as discussed above, Primavera Expedition does not

expressly that the project funding approval is effected by client (business) hierarchy as

claimed.

Schuyler et al. teach that an organization hierarchy effects funding approval, in

an analogous art of project administration and management, for the purposes of routing

the approval to the appropriate reviewer/approver of the funding request who is at an

appropriate (desired, required) level in the organization (hierarchy; Column 1, Lines 28-

32 and 61-64).

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention

that the construction project management system and method, with its customized

project documentation workflow, as taught by Primavera Expedition would have

benefited from effecting the approval of one or more of the project documents (e.g.

funding/payment approval for a requisition, invoice, purchase order, etc.) by a client

hierarchy in view of the teachings of Schuyler et al.; the resultant system enabling users

to route approvals to the appropriate reviewer/approver of the funding request who is at

an appropriate (desired, required) level in the organization (hierarchy; Column 1, Lines

28-32 and 61-64).

        Regarding Claim 101 Primavera Expedition teaches a project management

system and method comprising:

        - establishing a database maintained by a project management entity

(construction manager, general contract, owner, etc.; reference A: Pages 16-18; e.g.

Sybase; reference A: Pages xiv, 4; Bullet 10, Page 10);

        - providing funding approval associated with the project, the approval being

effected in association with a project document collection maintained in the database

wherein the funding approval comprises (e.g. approved revisions/change orders,

initial/committed budget, invoice/requisition approval, negotiated, etc.; reference A:

Paragraph 3, Page 16; Bullet 6, Pages 168, 173, 198; Step 5, Page 199; Paragraph 2,

Page 204; Pages 212-213):

        - series of approvers, multiple review stages hierarchy (workflow, steps,

identities; reference A: Paragraph 2, Page 204; reference B: "Reviews and Approvals",

Page 3);

        - automatically forwarding a notice requesting the approval of at least one

electronic document to a successive one of the entities upon approval of at least one

document by a previous entity review/approval process (document routing, change

management, distribution lists, multiple reviewers, etc.; reference A: 132, 312, 321, 324-

325; reference B: "Reviews and Approvals", Page 3);

- vendor accessing the project documentation collection (supplier, contractor,

partner, etc.; reference A: Pages 16-18);

- vendor entering/submitting project information electronically (invoices,

requisitions, purchase orders, change orders, etc.; reference A: Pages 177-179, 198);

and

- the vendor determining that approval for the project has been secured (e.g.

submit/track submittals, proceed orders, committed, actuals, pending, changes, etc.;

reference A: Page 6-8, 163-166, 181; "Funding", Bullet 5, Page 165; "reviewing

contract status", Page 188; reference B: "Reviews and Approvals", Page 3).

Primavera Expedition does not expressly teach effecting approval via a client

hierarchy as claimed.

Schuyler et al. teach a system and method for routing requests for authorizations

(e.g. approval for funding, expenses, applications, work assignments, etc.) wherein the

approval process is defined as a workflow wherein requests for approvals are routed

based on an approval process (workflow) rule that enables the funding approval to be

routed to a series of approvers/reviewers (i.e. successive one of the entities upon

approval by a previous entity) and/or a hierarchy of approvers (Column 1, Lines 28-32

and 55-68; Column 2, Lines 6-36; Column 3, Lines 59-68; Figures 2A-2B).

Schuyler et al. further teach that the system and method for managing requests

for approvals automatically notifies/forwards approval requests/approvals as well as

approval status information to the appropriate users (Column 8, Lines 45-48) and

enables users to access approval information over a computer network (Column 7,

Lines 38-42).

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention

that the construction project management system and method, with its custom multi-

stage/multiple reviewer workflow for managing the submission, receipt, review, approval

and payment for completed work, as taught by Primavera Expedition would have

benefited from identifying an approval hierarchy and effecting the approval of one or

more of the project documents (e.g. funding/payment approval for a requisition, invoice,

purchase order, etc.) via the approval hierarchy in view of the teachings of Schuyler et

al.; the resultant system providing a substantially automated and robust funding

approval process (Schuyler et al.: Column 1, Lines 40-45).

Regarding Claim 103, claim 103 recites similar limitations to Claims 68-70, 74,

80, 87, 94 and 96 and is therefore rejected using the same art and rationale as applied

in the rejection of Claims 68-70, 74, 80, 87, 94 and 96.

Regarding Claim 104, claim 104 recites similar limitations to Claims 68-73, 80,

82-83, 87-89, 93 and 96 and is therefore rejected using the same art and rationale as

applied in the rejection of Claims 68-73, 80, 82-83, 87-89, 93 and 96.

12.   Claim 92 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over

Primavera System, Inc.'s Primavera Expedition as disclosed in at least the following:

I. Primavera Expedition Version 6.0 User's Guide (1998), herein after reference

A; and

II. Primavera Web Pages (1999), herein after reference B

as applied to claims 68-87, 90-91, 93-95, 97-100 and 102 above and further in

view of DeFrancesco et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,505,176.

Regarding Claim 92 while Primavera Expedition teaches tracking the status of a

plurality of project documents associated with various contacts/businesses (e.g. tracking

submittal status; Page 329) Primavera Expedition does not expressly providing a list of

request for assistances associated with a particular business unit as claimed.

DeFrancesco et al. teach providing users with a list of pending funding

applications (requests for assistance) associated with a plurality of workgroups

(business units, workgroup queue; Column 3, Lines 40-60; Column 7, Lines 28-36), in

an analogous art of managing funding approvals, for the purposes of automatically

coordinating the request for assistance/funding (loans, mortgages, credit, etc.) workflow

amongst a plurality of businesses entities (workgroups; Column 1, Lines 15-37 and 65-68; Column 2, Lines 1-12).

More generally DeFrancesco et al. a workflow system and method for managing the funding approval process/workflow over a network wherein the funding request comprises a collection of documents, stored in a database (Column 4, Lines 1-10), that are routed based on a plurality of rules to a plurality of workgroups (divisions, groups, teams, etc.) for processing (particular set of functions/tasks; Abstract; Column 3, Lines 30-60). DeFrancesco et al. further teach that the funding approval system and method notifies users with respect to the funding approval process/workflow including notifying users of such things as steps completed, in-progress, are next and the like (Column 5, Lines 57-66) as well as returns approvals/requests to the previous approve and/or requestor as required (Column 7, Lines 47-54).

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention that the system and method for project management as taught by Primavera Expedition would have benefited from providing a users a list of the currently active (in process, pending, etc.) requests for assistance associated with a particular business unit (workgroup) in view of the teachings of DeFrancesco et al.; the resultant system enabling users to manage/coordinate the approval of requests for assistances (funding/credit requests) amongst a plurality of business entities (DeFrancesco et al.: Abstract).

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

- Dystrak et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,611,052, teach a system and method for managing a funding approval process (e.g. loan application processing) over a network.

- Norris, Jeffrey A., U.S. Patent No. 5,870,721, teaches a "closed loop" funding approval and dispersion system and method utilizing a collection of documents related to the funding request (e.g. loan application and supporting documents).

- Lebda et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,385,594, teach an online system and method for obtaining funding approval (e.g. mortgages).

- Heinemann et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,882,986, teach a system and method for managing invoices from submission to payment.

- EP 0387462, International Business Machines, teaches a project document approval system and method.

- IBM MQSeries Workflow Automates Business Processes to Help Companies Compete in E-Business (Business Wire, 1998) teaches the commercial use of IBM's workflow management system/method (Flowmark) to manage Chase Manhattan's Request for Assistance workflow as part of Chase Manhattan Bank's ongoing investments in information technology.

- IBM MQSeries Workflow Automates Business Processes to Help Companies Compete in E-Business (IBM Press Release, 1998) teaches the commercial availability and public use/sale of IBM's MQSeries message based workflow system and method.

The article further teaches the benchmarking an MQSeries based Request for

Assistance workflow with an existing Request For Assistance process/workflow at

Chase Manhattan Bank.

    - What's happening to workflow (1999) teaches the well-known utilization of

workflow systems and methods, such as IBM's MQSeries product, for routing

collections of documents for approval/processing. The article further teaches Chase

Manhattan Bank's "roll out" of a facilities management system and method known as

Picasso that assists the bank in managing construction projects.

    - Radosevich, Lynda, Is workflow working? (1999) teaches that workflow

systems/methods are being used to automate time consuming administrative tasks

associated with paper flow. Radosevich further teaches Chase Manhattan Bank's "roll-

out" of workflow system for managing construction projects known as Picasso.

    - Marlin, Steve, Chasing Document Management (1999) teaches Chase

Manhattan Bank's extensive use of workflow and document management systems and

methods for automating existing business processes. Marlin further teaches Chase

Manhattan Bank's development of a facilities management workflow system and

method in response to its 1996 merger with Chemical Bank. Marlin further teaches that

project administrators and project accountants carry out the "traditional" facilities

management process and that Chase Manhattan Bank's Picasso system/method is

used to manage requests for assistance.

    - Nowlin, Jerry, Construction Financing to Build Your Own Home (1990) teaches

the old and very well known process of requesting and receiving approval for a project

construction loan. Nowlin teaches a plurality of potential funding sources/approaches including but not limited to Bank Construction Loans wherein banks/lenders approve construction projects and make funds available via draw requests/payments as various portions of the project are completed (draw schedule); the completion of which is verified/certified by the bank/lender prior to funds release/dispersal.

     - OMWARE Web Pages (2000) teaches a commercially available system and method (MasterBuilder version 7) for managing construction projects including accounts payable/receivable, general ledger, budgets, bids, job costs and the like. The web Pages further teach that the project management system and method further comprises management for progress billing, unitary billing, loan draw request, change orders and purchase orders.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Scott L. Jarrett whose telephone number is (571) 272-7033. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday, 8:00AM - 5:00PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Hafiz Tariq can be reached on (571) 272-6729. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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